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Message Text

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43/46
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05

PM-03 SP-02 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-03

ACDA-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 SCCT-01 INRE-00 /055 W
---------- 014899
O 051309Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8877
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2053

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y
(ADDRESSEE PATTERN)

E.O. 11652 XGDS-2
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PFOR, LE, SY
SUBJ: PLS FORCES IN LEBANON

1. DATT AND OTHER EMBOFFS AGREE FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES ON FOLLOWING PICUTRE REGARDING PLA STRENGTH AND DIS-PSOITION IN LEBANON. GREATER DETAIL WILL BE SUPPLIED BY DAO IN SEPTEL.

2. UNDER COMMAND OF GEN. BUDAIRY ARE TWO PLA BRIGADES FROM SYRIA, EACH TOTALLING IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF 2,000 TO BZENTPP MEN. HITTIN BRIGADE HAS TWO BATTALIONS IN NORTH (TRIPOLI-AKKAR AREA), ONE BATTALION IN BEIRUT, AND ONE SUPPORT BATTALION AND HEADQUARTERS TROOPS SPREAD AMONG THEM. QUDASIYEH BRIGADE HAS THREE BATTALIONS AND ONE SUPPORT BATTALION AS WELL AS HEAD-
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QUARTERS TROOPS IN THE BEKAA, THOUGH ONE OF THESE

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BATTALIONS (WHICH PALESTINIANS TERM "BRIGADEZL MAY HAVE
RETURNED TO SYRIA RECENTLY.

3. UNDER ARAFAT'S COMMAND, THERE ARE TWO BATTALIONS
OF THE YARMUK BRIGADE STATIONED IN THE BEKAA.
THESE NUMBER ABOUT 800 TO 1,000 MEN AND HAVE BEEN IN
LEBANON FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. MORE RECENTLY ARRIVED IS ONE
COMPANY (ABOUT 100 MEN) FROM AIN JALLUT BRIGADE. TWO
BATTALIONS OF THAT BRIGADE HAVE REMAINED IN EGYPT, AND
ONE BATTALION WAS SENT TO ARAFAT THROUGH SYRIA. TWO
COMPANIES AND HEADQUARTERS TROOPS OF THAT BATTALION
(ABOUT 300 TO 400 MEN) HOWEVER ARE PROBABLY STILL IN
SYRIA. THESE TWO COMPANIES ARE LIKELY TO CROSS INTO
LEBANON IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. THUS TOTAL OF PLA FORCES IN LEBANON UNDER COMMAND
OF EITHER ARAFAT OR BUDAIRY NUMBER NO MORE THAN 6,000
AND REPRESENT PRATICALLY ALL THE TROOPS AVAIABLE
TO PLA WITH EXCEPTION OF BULK OF AIN JULLUT BRIGADE
STILL IN EGYPT, SAY 1,000 MEN. WE ARE NOT COUNTING
IN THESE EFFECTIVES FEYDAYEEN OR TWO FATAH-
PLO BATTALIONS (ONE THE SO-CALLED "QUSTAL BRIGADE")
ORGANIZED IN PARAMILITAR FASHION.

5. STRENGTH OF PALESTINIAN FORCES IN IRAQ NOT VERY
CLEA TO US. THEY SO FAR HAVE NOT BEEN RELEVANT.
EMBOFF RECENTLY PICKED UP RUMOR THAT CERTAIN PALEST-
INIAN UNITS IN IRAQ WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO LEBANON
AS PART OF FATAH-REJECTIONIST EFFORTS STRENGTHEN
THEMSELVES VIS-A-VIS SYRIANS. DIPLOMATIC SOURCE WHO
IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE PRETTY GOOD CONTACT WITH
PALESTINIANS TOLD ME A FEW DAYS AGO THAT HE HAD
LEARNED FROM ASSEM KANSO THAT ABOUT 200 TROOPS FROM
IRAQ HAD ARRIVED IN TRIPOLI AS SORT OF A PRAETORIAN
GUARD FOR IRAQI BAATHIST LEADER RIFAI THERE. HE
DID NOT BELIEVE THESE TROOPS WERE PALESTINIANS.

6. WE WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THESE
FIGURES VIEW WIDER REPORTING IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY.
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